

History of ROCA, by St. John Maximovitch

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The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is that part of the Russian Church which is outside the boundaries of the Russian State, governed at the present time by a Chief Hierarch and a Synod of Bishops chosen by the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Diaspora.

The Russian Church has had a part outside of Russia for about two centuries. The preaching of Christianity to the pagan tribes of Asia involved the founding of missions which became in the course of time dioceses in China and Japan. The spreading of Orthodoxy among the pagan population of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska and the establishment of the Mission, and then dioceses for North America, were a continuation of the preaching in Asia. In Western Europe, beginning with the 18th century, churches were built at first at the Russian embassies, and then separately from them in those places which were visited by Russians in their trips abroad. All these churches were considered to be in the diocese of the Metropolitan of Petrograd; most recently they were directly dependent on his vicar, the Bishop of Kronstadt. None of the Eastern Patriarchs, whose authority has been highly respected by the Russian people, and likewise none of the other heads of the Orthodox Churches, ever protested against such a spreading of the Russian Church. If according to the Church canons a duration of thirty years is sufficient to cause a church or a place to belong to that diocese which in the course of those years was in possession of it, then all the more must one recognize as undisputed the right of the Russian Church to those places which have been cared for by her for many decades. One may say quite certainly that this question would never have been raised if the Russian Empire and with it the Russian Church had remained in its former power and glory, and if no misfortune had befallen them.

After the collapse of the monarchy, at first the Russian Church continued both within and without Russia to enjoy her former rights. But this did not last long. Soon persecution began. The Communist regime which soon came to power set as its aim the uprooting of all religion, which according to Marxist teaching is prejudice and superstition. The chief blow was directed against the Orthodox Church, to which belonged the overwhelming majority of the Russian people, and which had inspired them over the centuries from the very Baptism of Russia. Churches began to be closed, clergy were persecuted and murdered, and this turned later into systematic battle against the Church with the aim of exterminating it.

Foreseeing the possibility that the Higher Authority of the Russian Church would be deprived of freedom and that it would become impossible for separate parts of the Russian Church to have contact with it, Patriarch Tikhon, who was then head of the Church, gave an instruction that in those regions which were separated from the Church Administration temporary church administrations should be established under the leadership of the eldest of the hierarchs in that region. At that time church administrations had already been established in places which had no contact with Moscow at the time of the civil war within Russia itself (in the south of Russia and in Siberia). And when there followed the great exodus of Russians from their homeland after the defeat of the troops that were fighting against the Communist regime, the Higher Church Administration of South Russia, headed by Metropolitan Anthony, who was known to the entire Orthodox world, found itself outside of Russia.

The hierarchs who arrived in Constantinople immediately appealed to the Locum Tenens of the Ecumenical Throne, Metropolitan Dorotheos of Prusa of blessed memory, with a request to permit them to continue to take care of their Russian flock. This permission was given them by an act of December 29, 1920. At the beginning of the next year, 1921, at the invitation of the Serbian Patriarch Dimitry, Metropolitan Anthony moved to Serbia, and the Higher Administration of the Russian Church abroad moved there also. Around him all the hierarchs of the Russian Church and all parts of the Russian Church outside the boundaries of the Russian state then united. The churches which had been in the jurisdiction of the vicar of the Metropolitan of Petrograd were entrusted to Archbishop Evlogy, at first by the Temporary Higher Church Administration, and then by Patriarch Tikhon. The ecclesiastical missions in the Far East (China and Japan), and likewise those bishops who had emigrated from Russia to

Manchuria, acknowledged themselves as subject to the Church Administration Abroad which had just been formed. In accordance with the desire of Patriarch Tikhon, one of the bishops who had arrived in Constantinople from the south of Russia (Metropolitan Platon) was assigned to America by the same Administration. To this Administration there were likewise subject the ecclesiastical mission in Jerusalem and a protopresbyter in Argentina.

The Higher Church Administration (which originated in southern Russia in the areas that were then free from Soviet authority, in harmony with the later Ukase of Patriarch Tikhon of November 7, 1920) was confirmed by the Locum Tenens of the Ecumenical Throne, Metropolitan Dorotheos, and was received in a brotherly way by Patriarch Dimitry of Serbia; it became in actual fact the higher Church authority for all Russian churches that were outside the boundaries of Russia.

The Higher Church Administration, in which at first, besides bishops, there were included likewise representatives of the clergy and laity, acknowledged as its supreme chief hierarch Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow. It viewed its separation from him as temporary and considered itself to be responsible before a future All-Russian Sobor, after the liberation of Russia from the atheist regime. Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow recognized the assignments made by the Higher Church Administration abroad. He even gave it orders, for example, concerning the assignment of Metropolitan Platon as diocesan bishop of North America and the conducting of an investigation of Bishop Anthony, former priest of the church in Copenhagen, who had been consecrated bishop in Belgrade.

In November of 1921 in Sremsky-Karlovtsy in Yugoslavia the first Sobor abroad was held, in which in addition to 24 bishops, representatives of the clergy and laity took part. Being thus the voice of all Russians who had succeeded in leaving the Soviet authority, the Sobor considered itself obligated to express its opinion regarding the situation in Russia, where all the rest of the population of Russia was languishing under the oppression of that authority. The Sobor appealed to the Genoa Conference with the request not to support the Bolshevik regime and to help the Russian people to become free of it.

The Bolshevik regime, seeing in this a threat against itself, decided to exert pressure on the Russians abroad through the Church authorities. Under the strong pressure of the Soviet government, Patriarch Tikhon

signed an ukase concerning the suppression of the Higher Church Administration, entrusting to Metropolitan Evlogy the responsibility for organizing a new one. After this, Patriarch Tikhon was immediately arrested.

Being guided by the Patriarch's previous decree of November 7/20, 1920, the hierarchs abroad assembled in a Sobor on August 31, 1922, and decreed that in place of the Higher Church Administration a Synod of Bishops should be chosen. As chairman of it there was elected the hierarch eldest in rank, who had occupied the oldest Russian see and had been, besides the Patriarch, the only permanent member of the Russian Synod -- Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev.

All Russian churches submitted to the Synod of Bishops, as earlier they had to the Higher Church Administration, and the Synod of Bishops which was elected became recognized as the Church authority abroad. The Synod and Sobor of Bishops continued to consider themselves and the churches in their jurisdiction as an inseparable part of the Russian Church. In accordance with the Russian custom, in all Russian churches abroad at Divine services the name of Patriarch Tikhon was commemorated, and after him the name of the head of the Church abroad, Metropolitan Anthony.

The Chairman of the Synod of Bishops abroad, Metropolitan Anthony, who after the arrest of Patriarch Tikhon was the eldest Russian hierarch still in freedom, rose up in defense of the persecuted Russian Church. In his epistles to the Most Holy Patriarchs, and to those non-Orthodox in positions of authority, he explained the true situation of the Russian Church, a situation which often was transmitted to them in a distorted form. His appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury had as a consequence the intervention of the English government in the fate of Patriarch Tikhon, and the latter was freed from prison when a trial against him had already been set and an accusation had been composed with the aim of obtaining the death penalty for him.

After the death of Patriarch Tikhon, the Russian Church Abroad acknowledged the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk; however, he was soon arrested and banished by the Soviet regime for his firmness and his unwillingness to make concessions to the atheist regime. The Church in Russia and abroad continued to

regard him as her head and his name was commemorated at Divine services in all churches. Then Metropolitan Sergius became his Substitute. At this time certain differences arose among the Russian hierarchs abroad, and an appeal was made to Metropolitan Sergius with the request that he make a decision on them. This allowed Metropolitan Sergius to express his view on the situation of the part of the Russian Church that was abroad. Addressing himself in a general letter to the bishops abroad on September 12, 1926, he wrote:

"My dear hierarchs, you ask me to be a judge in a matter of which I am entirely unaware... Can the Moscow Patriarch, as a general principle, be the leader of the ecclesiastical life of Orthodox emigrants?... The good of church affairs themselves demands that you, by a common consent, should establish for yourselves a central organ of church administration which is sufficiently authoritative to resolve all misunderstandings and differences and which has the power to put a stop to any misunderstanding and every disobedience without appealing for our support..." In this letter, which is filled with love for his fellow bishops abroad, he says: "We shall scarcely see each other again in the present life, but I may hope by God's mercy that we shall see each other in the future life."

This was the last letter of Metropolitan Sergius in which he freely wrote that which within himself he acknowledged as true. Imprisonment, threats with regard not only to himself but to the entire Russian Church as well, and the false promises of the Soviet regime broke him: within a few months after his letter, so full of love, to the hierarchs abroad, which was as it were his testament before his loss of inner freedom, Metropolitan Sergius issued a Declaration in which he recognized the Soviet regime as a genuinely lawful Russian regime which was concerned for the people's good, a regime "whose joys are our joys, and whose sorrows are our sorrows" (Declaration of July 16/29, 1927). At the same time, in accordance with the promise he had given the Soviet regime, Metropolitan Sergius demanded of the clergy abroad their signatures of loyalty to the Soviet regime.

This document was in complete contradiction with his view expressed nine months before this, that the Moscow Patriarchate could not direct the ecclesiastical life of emigrants. If for those in Russia who were undergoing terrible sufferings there might be conditions that would mitigate their moral capitulation to the cruel regime -- just as the church

canons at the time of the [ancient] persecutions mitigated the penances of those who renounced Christ after terrible sufferings -- nonetheless, for those who were in freedom and comparative safety there were no mitigating circumstances or justification or even meaning at all in such a signature. It can hardly be that Metropolitan Sergius himself believed that anyone abroad would submit to his Ukase, and he did this clearly in order to fulfill the demand of the Soviet regime and thus remove responsibility from himself.

However, Metropolitan Evlogy with his vicars and Bishop Benjamin of Sebastopol did indeed submit to the Ukase. Meanwhile, in Russia itself there were courageous confessors from among the imprisoned bishops and likewise among those who remained in freedom, who declared to Metropolitan Sergius that they did not accept the concordat with the atheist regime that was persecuting the Church. Many of them even broke off communion in prayer with Metropolitan Sergius as one who had "fallen" and had entered into league with the atheists, and a part of the clergy and laity in Russia followed them. The atheist Soviet regime cruelly persecuted such steadfast hierarchs and their followers. The Soviet regime, while not fulfilling the promises to Metropolitan Sergius which had caused him to make the concordat with it, at the same time deprived of freedom, banished, and even executed many of those who did not recognize the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius.

Among those who did not recognize Metropolitan Sergius' Declaration of loyalty to the Soviet regime were the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter (whose Substitute Metropolitan Sergius was), Metropolitans Agathangel of Yaroslavl and Cyril of Kazan (who had been indicated by Patriarch Tikhon as possible Locum Tenenses of the Patriarchal Throne in case Peter should be unable to exercise his office), Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, and many other well-known hierarchs. Indeed, Metropolitan Sergius himself had thought exactly like them not long before his signing of the Declaration for the reasons already mentioned.

The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius brought no benefit to the Church. The persecutions not only did not cease, but they even increased. To the other accusations which the Soviet regime made against clergy and laymen was added yet one more -- not recognizing the Declaration. At the same time churches without number were closed

throughout Russia. Within a few years almost all churches were destroyed or put to various other uses. Whole provinces remained without a single church. Concentration camps and places of forced labor held thousands of clergy, a significant part of which never regained freedom, being executed there or dying from excessive labors and deprivations. Even the children of priests and all believing laymen were persecuted.

The Russian Church Outside of Russia was spiritually one with these persecuted believers. Except for the several hierarchs already mentioned, all the rest, headed by Metropolitan Anthony, flatly refused to give signatures of loyalty to the Soviet regime, and they came out with an open denunciation. Moreover, Metropolitan Anthony, who very much loved Metropolitan Sergius and inwardly suffered for his beloved disciple and friend, wrote him personally a letter of admonition, which probably never reached him or in any case was no longer able now to influence his behavior.

Like the bishops and faithful inside Russia who did not recognize the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, so too the part of the Russian Church that was abroad did not cease to belong to the Russian Church. They all, just as before, remained in spiritual union with the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter, who was languishing in a desert place in the far north. His name was commemorated in all Russian churches abroad. In all these churches there were also prayers for the suffering brethren in the Homeland, for their deliverance from the atheist regime, and for the repose of those who had been martyred by the regime. Meanwhile, Metropolitan Evlogy, who had given the signature of loyalty to the Soviet regime which had been demanded by Metropolitan Sergius, was invited to a service of prayer in England for the suffering Russian Church, and he took part in it. This was interpreted as an act against the Soviet regime, and he was forbidden to serve by Metropolitan Sergius. Not wishing to submit to this decree, but at the same time not wishing to acknowledge his guilt before the Russian Synod Abroad, Metropolitan Evlogy asked the Patriarch of Constantinople to receive him and his flock temporarily into the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was done.

Notwithstanding the departure from the Church Abroad -- and, one may say, from the Russian Church altogether -- of Metropolitans Evlogy and Platon with their followers, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of

Russia remains the free part of the Russian Church. She has enjoyed the attention of the Most Holy Patriarchs and the other hierarchs of her sister Orthodox Churches. Patriarch Varnava of Serbia showed special attention to her and strove to return to the Russian Church Abroad those bishops who had separated from her, and he was likewise an intermediary between her and Metropolitan Sergius, whom he respected and loved as the rector of his days in the Academy. However, soon he had to become convinced that Metropolitan Sergius was in the hands of the Church's enemies and that his actions were harmful to her, concerning which he wrote to him directly.

Patriarch Varnava addressed himself directly to the Russian Diaspora with a sermon on July 9/22, 1930, during a service in the Holy Trinity Russian Church, when he said:

"You should know that the fanatics who are persecuting the Church are not only torturing her, but they strive also to divide her, to disunite her, and by every means they stretch out their criminal hands to you who are outside of your homeland. You, the loyal sons of Russia, should remember that you are the only support of the great Russian people.... The ecclesiastical dissensions which have been sown by the enemies of your homeland should at any cost come to an end. In your midst there is a great hierarch, Metropolitan Anthony, who is an adornment of the universal Orthodox Church. His is a great mind which is like to the first hierarchs of the Church of Christ at the beginning of Christianity. Church truth is to be found in him and those who have separated should return to him. All of you, not only those who live in our Yugoslavia, but also those who are in America, in Asia, in all countries of the world, should form, under the headship of this great archpastor Metropolitan Anthony, a single invincible whole, which will not give in to the attacks and provocations of the Church's enemies. I, as the Serbian Patriarch, and now your brother by blood, fervently pray to God that He will unite the Russian people abroad into a single whole so that Russia might arise the same as she was when the Orthodox Tsar was at her head, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and all His saints, I bless you with my Patriarchal blessing."

Patriarch Varnava took an active part in the activities of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, convoking under his chairmanship conferences of the representatives of the various church provinces abroad, with the aim of putting an end to differences and schism and restoring to the

Church Abroad those who had left her. With his participation and under his chairmanship there was worked out in 1935 a "Decree on the Russian Church Abroad," which was signed by him and by the Russian hierarchs and became the foundation for the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

The same relationship of complete love for the Russian Church Outside of Russia was manifested by Patriarch Gregory of Antioch, who always gave her his support. The Most Holy Patriarch of Alexandria was always in communion with the Russian Church Outside of Russia, and he showed her brotherly support and addressed her chief hierarch as her lawful head. The Most Blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem likewise not only permitted the activities of the Russian Church Abroad within the bounds of his Patriarchate, but even called upon her to participate in the activities of the Patriarchate. Thus, having need, because of certain difficulties which had arisen, to consecrate new bishops, he invited to concelebrate with him Archbishop Anastasy, who was then in Jerusalem and was later to become Metropolitan and Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad. The Most Blessed Patriarch Timothy was one of the bishops consecrated jointly by Patriarch Damian and Metropolitan Anastasy. The Archbishop of Mount Sinai was always in communion with the Russian Church Abroad. The Church of Bulgaria was in brotherly union with her. Within the boundaries of the Local Churches the Russian Church Abroad took care of her spiritual children in accordance with the sacred principles of those Churches and acted completely independently within the boundaries which were established for her, continuing to realize the rights which had formerly been given to the Russian Church.

In 1935 there was celebrated the 50th anniversary jubilee in sacred orders of the head of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anthony. The celebration of this jubilee assumed the character of a great triumph of the Orthodox Church. An active part was taken in it not only by the Serbian Church, within whose boundaries it took place, but there came also to Belgrade representatives of various other Churches. From the Church of Antioch there came Metropolitan Elias of Lebanon. Other representatives came from all corners of the earth.

In the next year, 1936, Metropolitan Anthony reposed. His successor was Metropolitan Anastasy, who had been chosen beforehand and was quickly elected by the Sobor of Russian Bishops Abroad.

At first this change did not bring any alterations in the situation of the Russian Church Abroad. She continued to exist and act as before, being governed by the "Decree" which had been accepted under the chairmanship of Patriarch Varnava, and everywhere she enjoyed externally all her former rights. In 1937, the Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, died in banishment, and apparently not long before this, or soon afterwards, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, who was supposed to become Locum Tenens after Metropolitan Peter, likewise died in banishment. The Patriarchal Synod of Moscow, composed of bishops invited by Metropolitan Sergius, confirmed the latter as Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne. At this time the Russian Church inside Russia was in a state of total desolation. There were only twenty bishops in freedom, and the majority of churches were closed, destroyed, or turned to some other use. Whole provinces and vast expanses had not a single church. Relics and wonderworking icons were taken to museums. The majority of the clergy that remained were in banishment, at forced labor, or lived concealing their rank, earning for themselves a pitiful living by any kind of work and only secretly celebrating services at the homes of faithful laymen.

At the same time Metropolitan Sergius, bound by his promise given to the Soviet regime, continued to affirm that there was no persecution against the Church in Russia. The Church Abroad, which was no longer subject to Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod, remained in her previous relationship to him, feeling herself to be spiritually one with the suffering Mother Church, and as before offering prayer for her and her suffering brethren.

In 1939 the Second World War began, into which Russia, governed by the Soviet regime, was also drawn. The people expected that the war would bring liberation from the Soviet regime, and at the beginning of the war whole divisions surrendered, not wishing to defend their oppressor. However, when the people understood that war was being waged against Russia, which the Germans wished to subject to themselves, they rose up in defense of the homeland. The Soviet regime took advantage of the popular feeling. Seeing that the faith which lay hidden in the people began in war time to burst out uncontrollably and that there was no possibility of holding it back -- because it was still, just as before, the chief inner strength of millions of Russians -- the Soviet regime decided to give concessions for the time being, and, by showing concern for the Church, to make the people its ally in the difficult war in which it could

easily be defeated without their support. Some closed churches were re-opened, and a part of the relics that had been taken to museums was returned. Only a small part of the holy objects and church property which the Soviet regime had seized was involved, but in this people saw a change in the relationship of the Soviet regime to the Church.

The Soviet regime allowed the election of a patriarch and an outward freedom to the Church, but in essence it did not alleviate the situation of the Church in the least. The Patriarch and his Synod were under the strict supervision of the regime and they could do nothing without the knowledge of the representative of the Soviet regime -- the Chairman of the Council for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church -- and they had to follow his instructions. In this there is no resemblance whatever to the situation of the Holy Synod in the times of the Tsars. The Russian Tsar and his government were Orthodox and strove for the good of the Church; and if, even then, there were instances when the representatives of the regime, the Ober-procurators, did not correctly understand the interest of the Church and their actions were harmful for her -- nonetheless, these were separate episodes, harmful in themselves, but not representing any systematic destruction of the Church.

Now, however, the Soviet government is Communist, atheistic in its foundation and idea, and it has set for itself the aim of exterminating every religion as superstition and implanting atheism. There can be temporary concessions, there can be various tactical approaches, but the fundamental aim remains unaltered. Making use of the Church authority and the Church for the attainment of its own different political aims, the Soviet government is preparing beforehand a blow to be delivered to the Church when it shall find this possible and convenient. We see proofs and examples of such flexibility of Soviet politics in every sphere. The Soviet government when it was necessary took broad advantage of the patriotism of the Russian people and put itself forth as an authentically Russian government; but the war had not even been finished when the Russian patriotic slogans were thrown out, the government put in the first place the international politics and aims of Communism, although for the time being it did not completely renounce historical Russian aims which were useful for it at that time. Again, permitting an increase in the influence of the army and its officers during the war, the Soviet government later separated itself from the generals who had become popular and sent into exile many outstanding soldiers, declaring that the whole success of the war should be ascribed to the Communist Party. Yet

again, having entered into friendly relations with various governments, the Soviet leaders subsequently turned abruptly about and began to cover with dirt those whom they had embraced. While during the war it had called people to support the wholeness and glory of the homeland, after the war the Soviet government gave over to death many distinguished Russian patriots.

So also in its relationship to the Church, the Communist government, in contradiction to its fundamental world-view, supports the Church, having in mind to destroy everything that is now permitted her as well as the very Church herself, when she shall cease to be useful to it.

Why, at the present time (1960), does the Soviet regime give the appearance of favoring the Church? Firstly, because it does not feel itself to be sufficiently strong as yet to engage in battle with the believing people inside Russia and enter into conflict with them, especially in view of the possibility of international complications. Secondly, because for the time being it needs a cover for its present aims and it uses the clergy in order to create a good opinion of itself among free peoples. Thirdly, because through the clergy under its control the Soviet government wishes to exert influence on the Russian Diaspora and keep the Russian emigration in its hands. Knowing that Russians unite themselves primarily around the Church, the Soviet government, not having the power now to destroy the Church, wishes for the time being to have influence through her on those who are not subject to it: holding the clergy in its hands, by this very fact it calculates on beginning to act on the flock as well. From this comes the demand, through the head of the Church which is subject to it, of a signature of loyalty to the Soviet regime on the part of all clergy. Is such a demand lawful, and can it be fulfilled?

Russians who live outside of Russia are not subjects of the Soviet regime. Remaining faithful to our Homeland, we do not acknowledge as lawful a government which goes against the thousand-year world-view of our people, and we have gone abroad in order not to submit to it. Why, then, should hierarchs and other clergy promise loyalty to it? Does the Archbishop of Constantinople, the Ecumenical Patriarch, demand loyalty to the Turkish government from his flock of Greek and other descent who are in America and other parts of the world? Does the Patriarch of Antioch, whose Patriarchate embraces Syria and Lebanon, demand loyalty

to one or the other government from the people subject to him? Did the Holy Synod of Russia demand loyalty to the Russian Government, or even to the Most Pious Emperor himself, from the Orthodox faithful who were citizens of America or were subjects of other governments ?

At the time of the Russo-Japanese War, the enlightener of Japan, the Russian Archbishop Nicholas [now glorified by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia -- ed.], who remained in Japan, blessed the Orthodox Japanese soldiers who went to war to fight for their own homeland. Although he himself did not celebrate services, since he could not pray for victory over his native Russia, he nonetheless permitted the Japanese clergy who were subject to him to do so. After the end of the war, for the fulfillment of his pastoral duty he was decorated by the Russian Holy Synod and by the Russian Tsar himself. If the Most Pious Tsar and the Holy Governing Synod acted in this way, does anyone have the right, and is there any moral justice therein, to demand from people who are fighting against an atheist regime, through their spiritual pastors, submission to this regime?

When the Serbian Patriarch Arsenius III, and after him Arsenius IV, together with their flock left their homeland, which was under the rule of the Turks, and settled in another country, the archpastors and pastors of the resettled Serbs did not submit themselves any more to the patriarchs of Serbia, which was enslaved by the Turks, in order to be free.

Did not a similar thing occur in Greece? Why did the Church of Greece arise and why does it exist as an autocephalous Church, whereas its territory from antiquity was a part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople? When in 1819-20 there was a rebellion of the Greeks against the Turks, the Turkish government demanded of the Patriarch the excommunication of the rebellious Greeks, and the Patriarch fulfilled this. Although the Greeks well knew that he was only outwardly fulfilling what was demanded of him, remaining heart and soul with them, nonetheless, declaring his interdicts invalid, they began to govern themselves ecclesiastically independently of him; and when a government of Greece was formed, an independent Church of Greece was established. For about 30 years the Archbishop of Constantinople and the Synod of Greece had no communion with each other, until a relationship was established between the Churches of the Patriarchate and of Greece as between independent Churches. Until recently the Greeks living in other countries were cared for by the Church of Greece, and only after the First World

War, when Turkey was half destroyed and became weak, did the Greeks in the diaspora become again the spiritual flock of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Church of Greece, however, up to now remains autocephalous and, after the Balkan and two World Wars, there have even entered into her new territories, annexed to Greece, which from of old belonged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople; while the Archbishop of Athens has received the title of Most Blessed. Evidently, only when Constantinople will again become the capital of the Greek Kingdom -- if by God's mercy this will be -- will the two Greek Churches come together again, just as the two separated parts of the Serbian Church were united when all Serbian territories had been liberated and united in one government.

If attempts to preserve spiritual freedom and to guard oneself from every influence of regimes which, even if non-Christian, nonetheless believed in God in their own way, and which, although they limited the freedom of Christians, permitted an open persecution only at times -- if such were the cause of an outward separation of parts of the Church from the Mother Churches, then it is all the more just, permissible, and essential to preserve the faithful from every pressure of a regime which has openly set itself the aim of fighting against religion as superstition and systematically striving to annihilate it.

The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. The Church has experienced terrible persecutions and has endured them, being crowned by a choir of new martyrs. But the Church has never desired persecutions, but has prayed for deliverance from them and from temptations. She has prayed for the failure of the persecutors, and it is well known that Julian the Apostate perished while St. Basil the Great was praying for the preservation of the Church from him.

Who needs the annihilation of the Russian Church Outside of Russia? Russian exiles, the Russian Diaspora? But it is precisely the Church Outside of Russia that gives them spiritual power, that unites and preserves them from complete extinction with the loss of Orthodox faith and together with it of the whole of Russian culture, which was formed by Orthodoxy. Only the enemies of Russia and of the Russian people can desire this.

Does the Russian Church inside Russia need, would she benefit from, the

annihilation of the Church Outside of Russia and her annexation to the Patriarchate? The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is not spiritually separated from her suffering Mother. She offers up prayers for her, preserves her spiritual and material wealth, and in due time she will unite with her, when the reasons for their disunity shall have vanished. And there is no doubt that within Russia also many hierarchs, clergy, and laymen are with us and would themselves be happy to act as we do if they were able.

The cessation of the separate existence of the Church Outside of Russia is needful and would be profitable only to the Soviet regime [and its successors in "free" Russia -- ed.]. Through the clergy the latter desires to have control over the emigration and influence on it. Those emigrants who would not desire to be under the spiritual leadership of pastors dependent on the Soviets, being left without a Church would be scattered and would no longer be dangerous for the Soviet regime. The clergy in Russia, especially the hierarchy, are hostages for the emigration. If, when there was no basis at all for making Patriarch Tikhon responsible for the activities of the Hierarchy of the Diaspora, he was nonetheless accused of this -- then if that Hierarchy were subject to the Patriarch, he now would bear full responsibility for it. Then, when Russian emigrants would make statements against the Soviet regime, the latter would not hesitate to hang the Patriarch from the gates of the Kremlin, just as the Turks hanged Patriarch Gregory V from the gates of the Patriarchate.

Without having visible contacts with her Church in the Homeland, the Russian Church Outside of Russia is in spiritual communion with all there who suffer and are persecuted, who languish in confinement and banishment.

We believe and know that Orthodox faith in Russia is strong.

The Lord God, Who preserved seven thousand men who did not bend the knee before Baal in the days of Elijah, today also has a multitude of His servants who secretly serve and pray to Him throughout the whole expanse of the Russian Land. Even among the hierarchs outwardly subject to the Soviet regime, many are inwardly tormented by this; when the opportunity comes, they will act according to the example of those at the Council of Chalcedon who declared with tears that they had given their signatures at the Robber Council under coercion, and following the

example of the Most Holy Patriarch Paul, who was tortured by his conscience and took the Schema in recognition of his weakness under the Iconoclasts. Of this there is the testimony of many who left the Homeland at the time of the Second World War. The Soviets know this also and they hold all of them under both open and secret supervision, especially those who are temporarily allowed abroad.

But at the same time there are manifestations of the opposite case. Just recently a professor of the Theological Academy, Archpriest Osipov, who several days before this had occupied a prominent position in the clergy, attacked God and Christian faith in print with frightful blasphemy. It turned out that in agreement with him were several other members of the clergy, who by a decree of the Patriarchal Synod of Moscow on December 30, 1959, were deposed from their rank and deprived of all ecclesiastical communion. They went out from us, but they were not of us, states the decree in the words of Holy Scripture [I John 2:19]. Without doubt, besides these that have already been uncovered, there are also other secret enemies of the Church who until the proper time pretend to be her loyal sons in order then to bring disgrace upon her. Under the regime of the godless there is a spiritual winter, during which it is impossible to distinguish trees that are deprived of their leaves (the Shepherd of Hermas). There the words of the Prophet Micah are completely fulfilled: Trust ye not each other, put ye not confidence in a friend; a man's enemies are the men of his own house [Micah 7: 5–6].

Russian emigrants, dispersed through the whole world, finding themselves often in difficult circumstances, await that radiant day when the Homeland will be liberated from the power of the godless ones who tear to pieces the soul and body of their brethren, and when they will be able to unite with the latter. The Russian Church Outside of Russia bears with them the heavy cross of banishment. Without having altered Orthodoxy in any respect, preserving the traditions and customs of the Russian Church and her material possessions which are located abroad, she cares for her flock according to her strength, retains it in Orthodoxy and raises new generations in it and spreads Orthodoxy to the peoples in whose midst she finds herself. In the churches of the Diaspora prayers are constantly raised up for the suffering Homeland, for the persecuted Church, for the tortured and murdered for whom prayer cannot openly be offered there, for the salvation of the Homeland and its deliverance from the cruel regime, for the restoration of right belief and piety. All these prayers are possible only under independence from those who are in the

hands of that same cruel regime and submit to it.

The Russian Church Outside of Russia, headed by a Sobor of Bishops, most of whom have been consecrated in the Diaspora and by their episcopal oath have promised to obey her ecclesiastical authority, has more than twenty bishops in various countries. She has monasteries for men and women, of which some have existed since the times of the Tsars (in Palestine), others received their beginning in Russia (Lesna Convent in France, Vladimir Mother of God Convents in California and Canada), and the remainder were founded in the days of our misfortunes, in the bosom of the Russian Church Outside of Russia (such as Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, the Monastery of St. Job of Pochaev in Munich, Novo-Diveevo Convent at Spring Valley, NY., the New Kursk Hermitage at Mahopac, NY, and others.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has her own seminary (which stands in the ranks of higher educational institutions in accordance with local laws), its own secondary educational institutions and schools, in which children growing up abroad learn Orthodox doctrine and receive Russian culture.

The parishes and church communities of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia are scattered throughout the world; they are to be found in great cities which have international significance, and in desert places where there is only a handful of Russians. They are cared for by priests who are often compelled to undertake great journeys to visit parishioners who live great distances apart. Others have to earn their living by some other work, because their poor flock cannot provide for them.

The archpastors and pastors of the Church Outside of Russia share with their flock all the spiritual and material burdens that are inescapably bound up with being in exile, and they fulfill their duty of service to the Orthodox, in particular the Russian, Church and the commandments of their conscience with regard to their earthly Homeland, Russia, and to their brethren.

But deprivations do not weigh upon them as much as the misunderstanding and the relationship to them of their brothers, the representatives of the other Orthodox Churches. While the Church

Outside of Russia goes on the same path to which at one time the Chief Hierarchs of the entire Orthodox Church gave their blessing, the relationship on the part of their successors has significantly changed. Restrictions are placed upon the Church Outside of Russia, and demands are presented to her Hierarchy and clergy that cannot be fulfilled for reasons of conscience and pastoral care.

When Russia was in her days of prosperity, she gave every support to her Orthodox brethren who were in worse circumstances, especially to those who had been subjugated by non-Orthodox rulers. It was not only the Government that directed all its efforts to this end, but the whole people took part in it as well. Prayers for them were offered both in churches and in homes. All the evening prayers, as printed in the complete prayer books, ended with the petition: "Cast down the blaspheming kingdom of the Hagarenes and subject it to Orthodox kings; confirm in right belief and raise up the horn of Orthodox Christians." This was printed both in church service books and in prayer books for the people -- anyone can verify it. The multitude of Russian people read this prayer daily in every corner of Russia right up to recent times.

Do we not all need to pray now even more for the casting down of a regime that is not merely blaspheming, but God-fighting, that has taken up arms not only against Orthodoxy, but against any kind of faith in God at all? And if prayers for this are frequently offered in the churches of other Christian confessions, should it not be the primary duty of Orthodox Christians to pray for this, and especially the sons of enslaved Russia who are outside her borders ?*

He who is in captivity and he who is in freedom will give in due time an answer to the Great Hierarch, the All-Just Judge.

May He then say: Thou hast been faithful over a few things... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (St. Matt. 25: 23).

* *Trans. note* [Fr. Seraphim Rose]: At every Divine Liturgy celebrated by the clergy of the ROCOR, the following prayer, written by Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, is appointed to be read aloud by the

priest before the Litany of the Catechumens:

"Deliver our Homeland from the cruel atheists and their authority. Hear the painful lamentation of us Thy faithful servants, who cry out to Thee in distress and sorrow day and night, O most merciful God, and lead their lives out of corruption. Grant peace and quiet, love and confirmation and speedy reconciliation to Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy most honorable Blood; but be Thou manifest even unto those who have gone away from Thee and seek Thee not, that not one of them may perish, but that they all may be saved and come to knowledge of the truth, that all with unanimity of mind and unceasing love may glorify Thy most honorable name, O meek and patient Lord, unto the ages of ages!"

Another prayer approved by the Synod Abroad for the faithful to read daily at home is:

"O Lord Jesus Christ our God, forgive us our transgressions, and by the prayers of Thy Most Pure Mother, save the suffering Russian people from the yoke of the godless authority. Amen."

This copy was taken off the internet and checked against the original *Orthodox Word* magazine #37 March/April 1971

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